



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY SUPPORTING STATE MEDFLY EFFORT *Officials urge public, farmers to be on guard against local infestation*

San Diego County government is working with state and federal officials to control and eliminate a Mediterranean fruit fly infestation that has been discovered in Tijuana, just six-and-a-half miles from the county border.

The county is part of an international, multi-agency effort launched that includes the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Mexican national agriculture agency (SAGARPA) and the Baja California Fomento Agropecuario (Department of Agriculture).

To prevent movement of this pest across the international border, state officials will begin tomorrow weekly releases of up to 14 million sterile Medflies in the 251-square-mile area of San Diego County south of Interstate 8 and west of Alpine. Sterile flies mate with the wild Medflies to biologically control the population.

Media questions on the discovery of the Medflies and the effort to combat them should be made to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, at (916) 654-0462.

In addition to assisting CDFA in the placement of additional traps in a two-mile border buffer zone between the coastline and Otay Mesa, County officials will also be assisting with increased inspection efforts at the border and playing an important role in providing notification to potentially impacted agricultural, commercial and residential entities.

The County already routinely monitors about 10,000 traps throughout the county, including 4,000 within the sterile Medfly release area.



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In addition, county inspectors are checking with local produce warehouses to make sure they do not have fruits and vegetables from Tijuana that may have Medflies.

County Agricultural Commissioner Kathleen Thuner urges the public and the agricultural industry to take steps to prevent Medflies from crossing the border into San Diego County.

“Don’t bring fruits and vegetables from Tijuana into San Diego,” Thuner said. “Also, if you employ Mexican workers who cross the border each day, make sure they don’t bring fruits and vegetables in their lunch bags. Medflies are also pretty good hitchhikers so check for flies inside your car before driving across the border.”

Medflies can attack more than 250 commercial and backyard crops, posing a serious threat to parts of the county’s \$1.3 billion agricultural industry.

For more information on the Mediterranean fruit fly, please check the USDA Web site at www.usda.gov or the CDFA Web site at www.cdfa.ca.gov.

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